

Staff-In-Confidence

HEADQUARTERS RFMF
Strategic Command



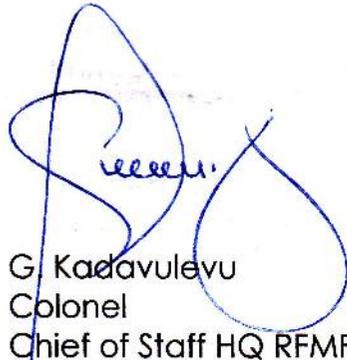
UPF 21475

Commander

re **ADVISORY NOTE ON GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY**

During interviews with you on 16 Dec 2003, I had mentioned that I would be offering a written advice. I have therefore prepared this written advice not as personal note but as your Chief of Staff. There is no malice thought or meanness envisaged in this advice but rather the advice represents a professional, legal and moral stand that the RFMF has been supporting all along.

It is hoped that the advice is read in the spirit that it is presented and that good sense will prevail.


G. Kadavulevu
Colonel
Chief of Staff HQ RFMF

05 January 2004

cc CLF
J3/8
J1/4

Staff-In-Confidence

CONFIDENTIAL

THE MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT

The saying that 'the military is the last bastion of law and order' not only holds true in any democratic society but has a much deeper meaning and standing. It connotes that the military recognizes the supremacy of civilian rule and that it is committed to upholding constitutional rule. The RFMF represents this in Fiji. What is unfortunate is that the reputation of the RFMF as a professional institution that upholds the rule of law has been tainted after the events of 1987 and 2000. What is reassuring however is that the RFMF continues to pursue the prosecution of those military personnel involved in the 2000 coup. This is what is sustaining our (RFMF) reputation as a professional military institution.

The on-going confrontation between you as Commander RFMF and the government is unfortunate and is causing concern and some anxiety amongst the local and international communities. This is especially so when this confrontation is being aired openly in the press. Such differences should be resolved professionally and in a professional manner between you as Commander and the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration. The matters under dispute (the persecution of the 2000 coup perpetrators, your contract and investigations into the actions of the RFMF during the May 2000 incidents) are nothing that is out of the ordinary. The differences in opinion over the issues under dispute can always be resolved through negotiation based on the principles of transparency and fairness.

Your recent utterances at your conferences of 16 and 18 December are of deep concern to us (officers). We feel that your intentions are contrary to all that is stated above. Besides we feel that the interests of the RFMF and the nation have been overridden by your personal wishes. First and foremost the issues under dispute, especially the renewal of your contract, are matters to be resolved between you and the Government. The RFMF as an institution cannot and must not be dragged into the dispute as a means for its resolution.

Secondly, please bear in mind the oath of allegiance that we all swore to when we first enlisted into the RFMF. The officers are standing by this oath. You have interviewed some of the officers personally. They have all individually given advice on the matter and as requested by you they have shown their standing regarding your intention. These officers' views

CONFIDENTIAL

and stance must be respected. These officers have taken both a legal and moral stand which is contrary to yours. This does not mean they are disloyal to you, they are only exercising their right as professional military officers in what they believe in – **'to discharge their duty according to law'**. Should you persist with your intention then this same privilege you gave to these officers must be extended to all ranks of the RFMF.

Thirdly the situation which you are bringing to bear on the RFMF and the nation for that matter, cannot be compared to the incidents of 1987 and 2000. Under the circumstances there is no way in which you can justify your intent and impending action. On the other hand the consequences of such action would only be catastrophic for Fiji. The despair and suffering will be unbearable and longer lasting than that experienced after 1987 and 2000. Whatever your feelings are about the issues under dispute, there is no other avenue open to you but to resolve the issues through legal means.

We must all recognise the fact that the RFMF is the **'final guarantor of law'** and our actions must therefore confer accordingly. Any attempt to create a supposedly national crisis so as to influence government action is considered unprofessional and falls within the elements of conspiracy and contempt. I strongly recommend to you that you make a bold stand as the Commander of the RFMF and go back to government and seek redress on the issues under dispute through the professional approach of negotiation and dialogue. There is no other way. To do otherwise is tantamount to conspiracy and treason.

I mentioned to you in our interview that I would provide you with a written advice. I have shared this paper with the senior officers of this Headquarters and they are in agreement with the contents. I urge you to please take heed of this advice and place the interests of the RFMF, the nation and its people before your own personal feelings and interests.

May God bless us all.